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SPIDER-MAN
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WATERY GRAVE

the Last Dance

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JUST SO YOU KNOW... MY NAME IS MIGUEL O'HARA.

OH, SOME CALL ME "MIGGY"... ONE GUY I CAN'T STAND CALLS ME "MIKE"...

...EVEN A FEW CALL ME "SPIDER-MAN",

YET, AS THE SUB-MARINER EMBARKS ON A WAR AGAINST NEW YORK TO FIGHT FOR THE FREEDOM OF NEW ATLANTIS...

...CARELESS OF THE DAMAGE HE DOES...

...ALL OF A SUDDEN I NOTICE THAT A SEA MONSTER IS VERY, VERY...

[redacted]

... VERY CLOSE TO CALLING ME:

"A SMALL YUCKY SPLOTCH."

LUCKILY MY PERIPHERAL VISION SEES IT AT THE LAST SECOND.

INSTANTLY I FLIP OUT OF THE WAY, STILL STRUGGLING WITH THE...

...ERSATZ SUB-MARINER, I GUESS YOU COULD SAY.

ROMAN SNARLS ANGRILY IN MY FACE AND THEN, ALL OF A SUDDEN...

...I LOSE MY GRIP ON HIM AS THE WATER TEARS HIM AWAY.

DESPERATELY I HEAD FOR THE SURFACE...

...EVERY SECOND THE NEED TO BREATHE **BURNING** IN MY LUNGS, AND **THEN**...

...**SUDDENLY**, I'M SUCKING AIR.

EACH GASP OF AIR TASTES **BETTER** THAN THE LAST.

ROILING AS THE WATERS ARE, I DON'T NOTICE IT AT FIRST... BUT THEN I **DO**. IT'S THE HORN **ROMAN** USED TO CONTROL HIS MONSTER.

VIRTUE REALLY **IS** ITS OWN REWARD.

EXACTLY AT THE **SAME** MOMENT, ONE OF THE ATLANTEAN **MUTATES** SPOTS IT AS WELL.

DOUBTLESSLY HE THINKS I CAN'T POSSIBLY BEAT HIM TO IT.

BOY, OH BOY... IS **HE** IN FOR A SURPRISE.

Eh? **YOU--!** YOU...

TWISTED...

...TREACHEROUS...

...EARTH-HUGGING **SIMPLETON!**

RETURN THAT AT **ONCE!**

GET BACK HERE! YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY--

WA

AK

BOY, I HOPE THIS WORKS.

A--HAK!

HUNNH! HUNNH!

SO... SO WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THIS ATTIC *FLOODS*, FATHER JENNIFER?

YOU DON'T HAVE *GILLS*, BY ANY CHANCE, *DO* YOU, GABRIEL?

I'LL HAVE TO MOVE **FAST.** NOT ONLY IS THIS THING **DESTROYING** DOWNTOWN...

...BUT SOONER OR LATER IT'S GOING TO GET TO THE SUPPORTS THAT KEEP **UPTOWN** IN PLACE, AND THE WHOLE THING WILL COME CRASHING DOWN AROUND...

SPIDER-MAN!

UH BOY.

FWIZZ

FORTUNATELY HE'S NOT ABLE TO CHANGE THE **DIRECTION** OF HIS LEAPS. AIRBORNE, **I'M** MORE MANEUVERABLE.

THAT FACT BOUGHT ME A FEW **SECONDS.**

THE TRICK IS MAKING EVERY ONE OF THEM **COUNT.**

NOW... I JUST HAVE TO FIND THE RIGHT **NOTE** THAT SAYS...

"GO THE SHOCK HOME."

RRRR

IT... IT SEEMS TO BE **HESITATING.**

WELL, THAT'S **SOMETHING,** AT ANY RATE.

THE WAY THINGS WERE GOING, I HALF EXPECTED IT TO START EATING THE ENTIRE **CITY.**

PUBLIC EYE! QUICKLY! DIVE, **DIVE!**

DIVE ALL YOU **WANT,** MUTATE SCUM.

WE'VE GOT ENOUGH **DEPTH CHARGES** TO FILET THE **LOT** OF YOU!

GIVE ME THAT *HORN*, SURFACE MAN.

WHY, SO YOU CAN DESTROY *MORE* INNOCENT LIVES!

NONE WILL DIE DURING *THIS* INCURSION. MY *MUTATES* WILL SEE TO THAT.

BUT YOU *ALL* BEAR GUILT! YOU ALL *KOWTOW* TO THE *WHIMS* OF ALCHEMAX. YOU'VE SOLD YOUR IMMORTAL SOULS IN EXCHANGE FOR MOMENTARY *SAFETY!*

AND *I* AM HERE TO TO LET YOU KNOW... THAT THERE IS *NO* HAVEN SAFE FROM THE WRATH OF THE SUB-MARINER!

ARRRHHH!

ANIMAL ARE YOU SO DESPERATE THAT YOU'RE REDUCED TO...

...TO BITING LIKE A...

WHAT'S... HAPPENING... GETTING HARD TO THINK...

IT'S THE VENOM IN MY FANGS.

LUCKILY FOR YOU... THE EFFECT IS TEMPORARY...

UNLUCKILY FOR YOU...

...YOU'VE REALLY TEED ME OFF!

FWIZZ

IT WORKED. WHATEVER IT IS I BLEW ON THE HORN...

...MUST HAVE BEEN THE SIGNAL FOR IT TO GO HOME.

AND IT MUST HAVE HAD SOME SORT OF LOW-LEVEL CONTROL OVER WATER. KEPT ENOUGH DEPTH TO SUPPORT ITS MASS.

BECAUSE AS IT'S GOING, IT'S TAKING THE WATERS WITH IT.

DEAR LORD...

WHAT MUST THE WORLD HAVE BEEN LIKE WHEN THOSE THINGS WANDERED THE EARTH?

FOR CRYING OUT *LOUD*, FIND OUT WHAT'S *HAPPENING* IN *DOWNTOWN*! *MIGUEL* IS DOWN THERE!

WITH ALL DUE *RESPECT*, HE SHOULD *NEVER* HAVE GONE INTO THE SITUATION WITHOUT PROTECTION...

SHOVE YOUR "DUE RESPECT"! JUST GET HIM *BACK* HERE IN ONE PIECE!

WELL, *WELL*, CONCHATA ...STILL MAKING *FRIENDS*, AS ALWAYS.

TYLER! WHAT THE SHOCK ARE *YOU* DOING HERE? MIGUEL THREW YOU *OUT!*

I'M AWARE OF WHAT HE...

HE...

*AND THEN, UNBIDDEN... HIS THOUGHTS ROLL BACK... BACK TO THE MOMENT OF HIS **SHOOTING**... BACK TO THE FORM CLOAKED IN SHADOW...*

AND THE SHADOWS... FALL AWAY...

OF COUUUUURSE...

CONCHATA, MY DEAR, FORGIVE ME.

I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YOU JUST NOW... WITHOUT YOUR GUN.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

OH, COME NOW, DON'T BE COY. SURELY YOU WANT TO SHOUT OUT, "I NEARLY KILLED TYLER STONE!"

AND BEST OF ALL, I DON'T HAVE TO ASK MELO-DRAMATIC QUESTIONS SUCH AS, "WHY?"

YOU TORMENTED MIGUEL. AND YOU WOULD'VE DESTROYED DANA, TOO...

YOU'LL NEVER BELIEVE ME... BUT I LOVED THAT GIRL. I TRULY DID.

I'M GOING TO MIGUEL'S INNER OFFICE NOW. BY THE TIME I COME OUT, I WANT YOU GONE.

CONCHATA...

HE KNOWS I'M HIS FATHER.

IT'S SO *BIZARRE*... LEAVING BEHIND A WHOLE LIFE, WONDERING WHAT I'M RUNNING TOWARDS...

...AND THROUGH IT ALL, I FEEL LIKE I'M LIVING ON BORROWED TIME.

I LEFT BEHIND A LIFE AS WELL... MANY *YEARS* AGO SOME OF IT IS STILL *HAZY* TO ME...

...BUT LATELY I'VE RECALLED SOME *IMPORTANT* THINGS. MY *NAME* FOR INSTANCE.

I WAS KINDA *WAITING* FOR AN INTRO. WHAT'S YOUR *NAME?*

TENSEN. JOHN TENSEN.

SO *TELL* ME ABOUT YOURSELF.

THERE'S NOT MUCH TO *TELL*, REAL--

AHHHHH!

LOOK *OUUUT!!*

SHWAMM

I THINK YOU'D BETTER *STOP* NOW.

THAT ENERGY PORTAL SHORTED OUT HALF THE CAR'S SYSTEMS.

" NOT MUCH TO *TELL?!?*"

NOT REALLY, ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT I HAVE METAHUMAN POWERS AND CAN PROTECT YOU FROM *ALL* HARM.

Y'KNOW, TENSEN...

THIS COULD BE THE START OF A *BEAUTIFUL* FRIENDSHIP.

NOW IF I CAN JUST GET THE HOLO-GRAM CHASSIS BACK ON...

YOU WILL *REGRET* THIS, O'HARA.

ALCHEMAX HEAD-QUARTERS...

NOT AS MUCH AS *YOU* WILL. I *WAS* GOING TO NEGOTIATE WITH YOU. TRY AND GIVE NEW ATLANTIS AN EVEN *BREAK.*

INSTEAD YOU'VE LEFT ME *NO* CHOICE. INSTEAD OF A BREAK, I'LL GIVE YOU AN *ULTIMATUM.* THAT THEY ARE TO SURRENDER THEMSELVES *AND* THEIR PROPERTIES *IMMEDIATELY* OR ELSE...

OR ELSE *WHAT?*

CHOOM

I KNEW YOUR *PREDECESSOR,* O'HARA! WE WITHSTOOD *HIS* POSTURINGS AND THREATS AS WELL!

YOU'RE AS BAD AS TYLER STONE *EVER* WAS!

GOD, WHAT A DAY.

HOW COULD IT *POSSIBLY* GET ANY WORSE?

NOT NOW, MIGUEL. MOTHER'S IN *CONFERENCE.*

Uh Boy.

ST. PATRICK'S, DOWNTOWN.

GO IN *PEACE*, MY SON.

HOLD THIS TRUNK FOR ME TILL THINGS SETTLE DOWN, FATHER.

SURE, WE WERE *FORTUNATE* TO ESCAPE THE DELUGE. APPARENTLY THE LORD HAS *FURTHER* PLANS FOR US.

AND MY *DREAMS*, FATHER?

PRAY FOR *GUIDANCE*, MY SON.

PRAY FOR GUIDANCE, AS I HAVE SO *MANY* TIMES IN THE PAST...

...MAY NOT *ALWAYS* BE WHAT YOU *EXPECTED*.

AND BE AWARE THAT THE SUGGESTIONS YOU RECEIVE...

THAT ENCLOSURE IS REALLY TAKING A ***POUNDING!*** ARE YOU ***SURE*** IT'LL HOLD UP?

LET'S PLAY IT ***SAFE*** AND GAS-TRANQ HIM.

I CAME TO TRY AND ***REASON*** WITH YOU, MIKE. TO GIVE YOU ONE LAST CHANCE TO TURN THE REINS BACK TO ***ME.***

IF YOU DO ***NOT...*** THEN FOR ***STARTERS...***

...I SHALL INFORM THE AUTHORITIES OF YOUR MOTHER'S ***MURDER*** ATTEMPT.

ALCHEMAX ***IS*** THE AUTHORITY, TYLER. ***YOU'VE*** SEEN TO THAT.

BESIDES, TYLER, YOU'RE ***SLIME.*** I KNOW WHERE THE BODIES ARE BURIED, AND I KNOW WHAT YOU ***DID*** TO YOUR DEAR DEPARTED WIFE.

JUST WALK ***AWAY*** MIGUEL, AND LET ME ***END*** THIS.

YES, BY ALL ***MEANS,*** MIKE, WALK AWAY.

AND PUT THE ***LIE*** TO YOUR MORAL POSTURING ONCE AND FOR ***ALL.***

MA... CALL DOWN TO THE *LAB.*

TELL THEM I WANT THE SUB-MARINER RELEASED *IMMEDIATELY* AND ESCORTED BACK TO THE OCEAN. I WANT IT DONE *NOW.*

BUT... BUT WHAT ABOUT...

NOW, MA. BEFORE THIS DAY GETS EVEN *MORE* OUT OF CONTROL.

KA-RASH!

FOOLS! YOU THOUGHT TO IMPRISON THE ONE *TRUE,* SEA-BORN *SUB-MARINER!*

SERGEANT? WHAT'S WITH THE ALARMS?

THE SUB-MARINER, SIR! HE BROKE OUT OF THE LAB!

WE PINNED HIM IN A CROSSFIRE DOWN NEAR LAB 27, BUT...

LAB 27! THAT'S WHERE WE STORE THE VENOM SYMBI--

BCHOOM

RUE THIS DAY, ALCHEMAX! DREAD THE FUTURE, O'HARA!

WE RETURN TO OUR OCEAN HOME! BUT SOMEDAY, WE SHALL FINISH WHAT WE HAVE BEGUN!

ENJOY THE REST OF 2099, O'HARA, FOR YOU WILL NOT SEE 2100.

TERRIFIC.

GOOD-BYE, TYLER.

I'LL SEE YOU IN HELL.

FWIZZ

BLAM

W-WHAT WAS THAT? WHAT WAS THAT?!

A WEBLINE, MY DEAR, NOT EXACTLY UNUSUAL... FOR SPIDER-MAN. IS IT, SON?

I'VE KNOWN SINCE THE VERY BEGINNING, MIKE. KEPT IT TO MYSELF.

BUT NOW IT'S TIME FOR ALL THE CARDS ON THE TABLE. TIME TO KNOW... WHERE WE ALL STAND.

YES. TIME TO KNOW.

BLAM BLAM BLAM

WELL, WELL. *THAT* WAS VERY INTERESTING.

YOU'RE AS RUTHLESS AS I COULD HAVE *HOPED*.

WELL *DONE*... SON.

THAT... THAT *CREEP!* IT WAS ALL A *GAME* TO HIM! HE WAS NEVER EVEN *HERE!*

IT WAS A SOPHISTICATED *HOLOVID!*

HE DIDN'T THROW ANY SHADOWS. THAT WAS THE TIP-OFF.

SO... SO YOU REALIZED *BEFORE* YOU SHOT AT HIM?

MIGUEL? *DID* YOU?

I HOPE SO.

MIGUEL... NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS... NO MATTER WHERE WE GO FROM *HERE*...

...I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT NO MOTHER *EVER* LOVED HER SON MORE THAN *I* DO RIGHT NOW...

...BECAUSE NO MOTHER HAS EVER HAD A SON WHO WAS *SO* MUCH A *BETTER* PERSON THAN *SHE* WAS.

Uh... LOOK, MA... HOW ABOUT WE TAKE THE REST OF THE DAY OFF? GO OUT TO DINNER.

GOOD *IDEA*, BOSS.

WE ARGUE ABOUT WHERE WE'RE GOING TO EAT... AND IT'S THE FIRST ARGUMENT WE'VE EVER HAD THAT'S **FUN.**

I'M LEFT WONDERING IF SHE REALLY **DID** KNOW ALL ALONG, AS **TYLER** DID.

I'M LEFT WONDERING ABOUT **GABRIEL**... AND **SUB-MARINER.** AND **VENOM**... AND **GOBLIN**... AND AND **EVERYTHING** ABOUT THE FUTURE.

AND YET, SOMEHOW... I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL...

...THAT IF I WAS ABLE TO REACH SOME DEGREE OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE CRAZY LADY...

...THEN, SOONER OR LATER, EVERYTHING ELSE IS **BOUND** TO FALL INTO PLACE.

AND MAYBE THE CURSE OF SPIDER-MAN... WAS MORE OF A BLESSING THAN I'D EVER BEEN PREPARED TO **ADMIT.**

NAH, THAT'S **PUSHING** IT.